

The President's Daily Brief

11 August 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The British now believe that the French may be more receptive than in the past to European defense cooperation based on collaboration between their two countries--including nuclear cooperation. (Page 1)

Senior Lao Army officers and other rightists are seeking changes in the draft agreement, possibly in a deliberate effort to scuttle the formation of a coalition government. Souvanna intends to arbitrate the differences in hopes of completing negotiations before August 15. (Page 2)

President Sadat, King Husayn, and possibly President Asad may meet later this month to discuss a restoration of the Eastern Front Joint Military Command. If Egypt has in fact dropped its previous unacceptable conditions for normalizing relations with Jordan, such a meeting could seal Husayn's reconciliation with Cairo and Damascus. (Page 3)

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FRANCE

London now sees Paris as being somewhat more receptive on the issue of European defense cooperation based on Franco-British collaboration.

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Foreign Minister Jobert's speech on June 19, as positive signs that the French are changing their attitude toward European defense--including nuclear cooperation. Jobert reportedly told a West European ambassador last month that European defense ideas "could not be confined to purely conventional arms."

The issue of Franco-British nuclear co-operation has been aired many times over the past decade, with no discernible progress. Various initiatives have failed, largely because of the complex substantive problems involved, such as the role of Germany and each country's unwillingness to relinquish national control over nuclear forces.

The revival of interest has been sparked by French and British fears that there will be a significant pullout of US troops from Europe in the near future. They are also concerned that detente between the US and the USSR constitutes evidence of a declining US commitment to European defense.

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French defense policy is undergoing a thorough re-evaluation, but so far Paris has offered no concrete suggestions. Paris may be raising the issue to find out if any support exists for a reorganization of European defense under French leadership.

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LAOS

Senior Lao Army officers and other rightists are still seeking changes in the draft agreement.

--They object to the requirement that most Lao Army combat troops withdraw from Vientiane and Luang Prabang.

--The army wants additional government enclaves recognized within the Communist zone.

--Several right-wing leaders reportedly want to delimit the duties of the Joint National Political Council, whose primary task will be to organize elections, to preclude it from replacing the National Assembly.

Negotiators on both sides believe that the army's shopping list of changes is not designed to improve the protocol but to delay its signing and perhaps scuttle the formation of a coalition government.

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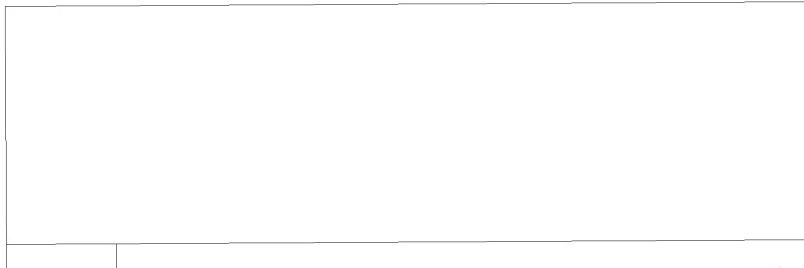
Souvanna is angered by this last-minute attempt to make major changes, but has agreed to make the effort to gain further concessions. At the same time, he has said that the Communists are unlikely to alter the agreement; he intends to arbitrate the remaining differences next week in order to complete negotiations around August 15. Souvanna met with senior Communist negotiator Phoumi Vongvichit yesterday, probably to discuss the rightists' objections.

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JORDAN-EGYPT-SYRIA

According to semiofficial newspapers in Cairo and Amman, President Sadat, King Husayn, and probably President Asad will meet later this month. The Jordanian paper reported that the three plan to discuss a revival of the Eastern Front Joint Military Command, which collapsed when King Husayn cracked down on the fedayeen in September 1970. The paper also said they will try to arrive at a common political stand in preparation for the visit of UN Secretary General Waldheim in late August.



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Husayn has been seeking a reconciliation with Cairo and Damascus, largely in hopes that this will persuade the Kuwaitis to resume their annual subsidy. He has refused, however, to go along with the conditions previously set by Egypt--control by other participants over his army, and the readmission of the fedayeen and other Arab troops into Jordan.

Sadat may be dropping these demands now because he wants a show of unity to demonstrate Arab self-reliance in the face of the US-Soviet detente. Syria's Asad

would probably go along with almost any tack Sadat chose to take with Husayn.

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